

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-06

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 H-01 CA-01 HA-05 SSO-00 /024 W
-----091534 232009Z /63

O R 231930Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5590
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL DOUALA POUCH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 YAOUNDE 2579

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CDES
SUBJECT: DEATH OF REVEREND AND MRS. ERICKSON

REF: (A) STATE 130501 (B) YAOUNDE 2552 AND PREVIOUS (C)
STATE 128620

1. FOLLOWING IS ACCOUNT OF EVENTS SURROUNDING DEATHS OF REVEREND MAYNARD ERICKSON AND MIRIAM ERICKSON AS TOLD BY SON, REVEREND JAMES ERICKSON. THIS ACCOUNT WAS VERIFIED BY LEONA TROFTGRUBEN, MISSION NURSE, DAVID CASPER, PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER, AND MARILYN ERICKSON, DAUGHTER-IN-LAW OF DECEASED.

2. REVEREND MAYNARD ERICKSON AND HIS WIFE MIRIAM SUNWALL ERICKSON WERE KILLED ON TUESDAY NIGHT, MAY 16TH BY UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS. REVEREND AND MRS. ERICKSON HAD SPENT EARLIER PART OF EVENING AT HOME OF LEONA TROFTGRUBEN, NURSE AT MISSION, AND JOANNE CRONKS, MISSION BOOKKEEPER. THE ERICKSONS CAME OVER IN THE EARLY EVENING BRINGING WITH THEM A PITCHER IN WHICH THEY INTENDED TO TAKE HOME COLD WATER FROM MISS TROFTGRUBEN'S REFRIGERATOR. THE ERICKSONS REMAINED WITH THE TWO WOMEN FOR DINNER AND AFTERWARDS THE FOUR PLAYED GAMES UNTIL AROUND 9 O'CLOCK WHEN A STRONG WIND AROSE PRESAGING A SAND STORM, COMMON IN AREA AT THIS TIME OF YEAR. RATHER THAN RETURN HOME JUST TO CLOSE WINDOWS, THE
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ERICKSONS DECIDED TO TURN IN AND LEFT MISS TROFTGRUBEN'S HOME CARRYING ALONG WITH THEM THE PITCHER, FILLED WITH WATER AS INTENDED. THIS WAS LAST TIME THE ERICKSON'S WERE SEEN ALIVE.

3. IT IS CERTAIN THAT THE ERICKSONS DID MANAGE TO RETURN HOME BECAUSE THE PITCHER THEY WERE CARRYING WAS FOUND INSIDE THE HOUSE. ALSO, THE WINDOWS ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE HOUSE HAD

BEEN CLOSED.

4. NORMALLY REVEREND AND MRS. ERICKSON DID NOT USE THE FRONT DOOR UNLESS THEY HAD A CALLER. THE DAY AFTER THE TRAGEDY, THE FRONT DOOR WAS FOUND OPEN WITH THE PORCH LIGHT ON. IT APPEARS THAT SOMETIME DURING THIS STORM, WHICH LASTED ABOUT AN HOUR AND A HALF, THE ERICKSON'S HAD A VISITOR WHO PRESENTED A PERSUASIVE ENOUGH ARGUMENT TO INDUCE REVEREND ERICKSON, ACCOMPANIED BY MRS. ERICKSON, TO FOLLOW HIM TO THE CHURCH.

5. THE ROUTE FROM REVEREND ERICKSON'S HOUSE TO THE CHURCH SHOWED NO SIGNS OF A STRUGGLE HAVING OCCURRED. ALL APPEARANCES ARE THAT REVEREND ERICKSON WAS KILLED NEXT TO EAST DOOR OF THE CHURCH WHILE MRS. ERICKSON WAS KILLED CLOSE TO NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE CHURCH. INDICATIONS ARE OF MORE THAN ONE KILLER. IT IS UNCERTAIN AS TO WHICH DIED FIRST.

6. ENROUTE TO WORK EARLY WEDNESDAY MORNING, THE ERICKSON'S GARDNER, CHIPSIA, SPOTTED A CROWN CONGREGATED AROUND THE BODY OF A WHITE WOMAN. INSTEAD OF INVESTIGATING IMMEDIATELY, HE RAN TO ERICKSON HOUSE TO GET REVEREND ERICKSON TO COME WITH HIM. NOT FINDING ANYONE AT HOME, HE PROCEEDED TO MRS. TROFTGRUBEN'S HOUSE AND TOLD HER HE COULD FIND NEITHER THE REVEREND NOR HIS WIFE.

7. MISS TROFTGRUBEN AND MISS CRONK CHECKED THE ERICKSON HOUSE,
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FINDING NO ONE INSIDE. AS MRS. ERICKSON WAS IN HABIT OF TAKING EARLY MORNING WALKS, THE WOMEN THOUGHT THAT SHE MIGHT HAVE DONE SO THIS PARTICULAR MORNING ACCOMPANIED BY MR. ERICKSON AND THAT SHE MIGHT HAVE FAINTED ALONG THE ROUTE. FINDING NEITHER SUBJECT, THEY CONTINUED TO SEARCH UNTIL THEY FOUND MR. ERICKSON'S GLASSES AND MRS. ERICKSON'S SHOES IN FRONT OF CHURCH. THEY THEN WENT INTO TOWN TO REPORT THE ERICKSONS MISSING TO THE GENDARMERIE.

8. IN THE MEANTIME, CHIPSIA, THE GARDNER, WENT TO HOME OF FORMER MINISTER OF THE PTT, AKASSOU, TO ENLIST HIS ASSISTANCE. AKASSOU AND CHIPSIA WENT DIRECTLY TO PREFECT TO REPORT THE DISCOVERY OF A BODY. WHEN TROFTGRUBEN AND CRONK ARRIVED WITH SOLDIERS, BOTH BODIES HAD BEEN DISCOVERED BY THE PREFECT.

9. MRS. ERICKSON WAS FOUND NEAR THE CHURCH IN A SMALL GULLY. (HER THROAT HAD BEEN SLIT AND HER TEETH KNOCKED OUT. THERE WERE NO APPARENT SIGNS OF STRUGGLE AT THE SITE OF HER EXECUTION. SHE HAD BEEN DRAGGED FEET FIRST FROM SITE OF EXECUTION TO GULLY.

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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
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8. REVEREND ERICKSON'S BODY WAS FOUND FURTHER DOWN HILL, CLOSE TO TOBACCO FIELDS AND THERE WERE SIGNS OF CONSIDERABLE STRUGGLE AT EAST DOOR OF CHURCH WHERE REVEREND ERICKSON WAS KILLED. HIS RIGHT BICEPS HAD BEEN CUT IN WHAT APPEARED TO BE AN ATTEMPT TO PREVENT STRUGGLE AND THERE WERE KINFE MARKS AT HIS RIGHT TEMPLE. HE HAD BEEN STABBED SIX (6) TIMES IN CHEST. THE LAST TIME THE KNIFE PENETRATED THROUGH HIS BACK. THE ASSAILANTS ATTEMPTED TO PULL THE KNIFE OUT BUT AS KNIFE WAS A CHEAP LOCALLY MADE BRAND, THE HANDLE PULLED OFF. REVEREND ERICKSON'S TESTES HAD BEEN REMOVED AND HIS TEETH WERE ALSO BROKEN. LATER HIS TESTIAL SAC WAS FOUND LYING ON VERANDA OF FIRST HOUSE IN MISSION CONCESSION. IT IS ASSUMED THAT THE TESTES WERE TAKEN TO BE USED IN RITUAL SACRIFICE.

9. IT IS ASSUMED THAT BOTH ERICKSONS MUST HAVE CRIED OUT DURING THEIR MURDERS, BUT THE HIGH WINDS OF THE STORM PREVENTED ANY SOUND FROM BEING CARRIED.

10. ROBBERY CAN BE RULED OUT AS MOTIVE FOR CRIME AS NOTHING WAS TAKEN FROM THE HOME AND REVEREND ERICKSON, WHEN FOUND, STILL HAD 14,000 CFA IN HIS POCKET.

11. DAVID CASPER, A PCV IN AREA ACCOMPANIED MS. CRONK TO NDOUKOULA TO INFORM SON OF DECEASED, REVEREND JAMES ERICKSON.
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BEFORE AND AFTER SON ARRIVED LOCAL CHRISTIANS WERE EXTREMELY HELPFUL IN PREPARING BODIES AND MAKING NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS.

12. BURIAL TOOK PLACE ON THURSDAY MORNING MAY 18 AT 9 O'CLOCK FOLLOWING A 8:15 FUNERAL SERVICE. THE ERICKSON'S WERE BURIED NEXT TO DAUGHTER MARTHA'S GRAVE IN A PLOT DONATED TO MISSION BY FORMER MINISTER AKASSOU. PERSONS OF NOTE ATTENDING FUNERAL WERE: GOVERNOR OF NORTHERN PROVINCE; PERFECT OF YAGOUA; EX MINISTER AKASSOU; THE COMMISSAIRE SPECIALE OF YAGOUA; SUB-PREFECTS FROM YAGOUA AND NDOUKOULA; REVEREND AND MRS. JOLE OLSON; REVEREND CAM AND BARB ERICKSON, COUSINGS; REVEREND LYLE AND MARILYN HUNTER; DR. AND MRS. DAVID THOMPSON; REVEREND AND MRS. DONALD RAUN; MISS CRONK; MISS TROFTGRUBIN; REVEREND EICENBERGER; REV. STEUBLIE; AND FATHER ALAIN AND ASSORTED MEMBERS OF CATHOLIC CONGREGATION.

13. EMBASSY VISITORS WERE REPEATEDLY ASSURED AND SAW EXAMPLES THAT ILLUSTRATED THAT THE CAMEROONIAN GOVERNMENT IS MARSHALLING CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES AND MAKING EVERY EFFORT POSSIBLE TO CATCH CULPRITS. PRESIDENT AHIDJO, REPORTED TO HAVE KNOWN REVEREND ERICKSON FOR YEARS, WAS SAID TO HAVE TAKEN A PERSONAL INTEREST IN APPREHENDING PERPETRATORS.

14. REVEREND AND MRS. JAMES ERICKSON, MRS. TROFTGRUBEN, AND REVEREND AND MRS. RODNEY VENBERG WISH THEIR FAMILY AND FRIENDS ASSURED EVERYTHING NOW UNDER CONTROL. NO ONE ELSE HAS BEEN HARMED AND THERE IS NO NEED FOR EITHER ROY ERICKSON OR MARGARETHE SWANSON TO RETURN TO CAMEROON. THEY ASKED THAT THIS MESSAGE BE PASSED PARTICULARLY TO FOLLOWING PERSONS:

FROM LEONA TROFTGRUBEN: PLEASE NOTIFY MY PARENTS, MRS. EDROY TROFTGRUBEN, EDINBURG, NORTH DAKOTA 58227, TELEPHONE 701-993-8788 AND SISTER, MRS. KEN (CHERYL) MCDONALD, 424 KAY AVENUE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEMIDJI, MN 218-751-1377.

FROM MARILYN ERICKSON: PLEASE NOTIFY MY PARENTS, RAY TROCHMANN, BORUP, MINNESOTA 56519, TELEPHONE 218-582-3324.

FROM REVEREND AND MRS. RODNEY VENERG: PLEASE NOTIFY MR. AND MRS. ED VENBERG, 5070 SO. ROBERTS TRAIL, INVER GROVE HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA 55075.

15. RE PARAGRAPH 2 REF C, MARILYN HUNTER DEPARTED YAGOUA BEFORE ARRIVAL OF EMBASSY TEAM. HOWEVER, MESSAGE REGARDING HER MOTHER'S HEART ATTACK WAS GIVEN TO REVEREND JAMES ERICKSON WHO PROMISED TO PASS IT ON THROUGH MISSION CHANNEL.
SMYTHE

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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